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Rush-hour train evacuated in smoke scare

Smoke reported underneath rear four carriages of Southeastern commuter service from Gravesend to London

Press Association
theguardian.com, Tuesday 27 August 2013 14.32 BST



The smoking train at Hither Green station. Photograph: Nils Jorgensen/Rex Features

Passengers on a rush-hour train were led to safety after smoke was reported underneath the rear four carriages.

Travellers on the 7.17am ~~London~~-bound Southeastern service from Gravesend in Kent pulled the emergency alarm and the train stopped halfway into the platform of Hither Green station just before 8am.

With the track power switched off, passengers in the front four coaches were able to leave through the station, while those in the rear four coaches evacuated on to the track where they were met by staff and escorted through a nearby depot. There were no reports of any injuries.

The train was taken out of service and the cause for the fault was being investigated. Southeastern said early indications showed that the train's shoe gear, the component which draws power from the track, had overheated and billowed with smoke.

Apologising to passengers, a spokesman for Southeastern said: "This was an understandably distressing event for the passengers on board the train this morning. Thankfully we've had no reports of any passengers injured. We're fully investigating the cause of the problem to make sure this doesn't happen again."

Buses replaced services between Dartford and London Bridge via Sidcup, and other services were diverted via Bexleyheath. The lines were reopened at 10am with some knock-on delays. Services had returned to normal by 11.45am.



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